

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 264

By Armstrong

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the centennial anniversary of the National Dental Association.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should commemorate the distinguished history and significant milestones celebrated by those professional organizations and their members who have rendered dedicated and adroit service to their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding organization is the National Dental Association (NDA), which for the past one hundred years has promoted oral health equity among people of color by harnessing the collective power of its members, advocating for the needs of and mentoring dental students of color, and raising the profile of the dental profession; and

WHEREAS, building upon the legacy of its predecessors, the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society and the National Association of Colored Dentists, the Tri-State Dental Association was formed in 1913 under the stellar leadership of Dr. D.A. Ferguson of Richmond, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, membership soon expanded to include members from fourteen states, and in 1918 the Association was reorganized as the Interstate Dental Association; and

WHEREAS, by 1923, African-American dentists from twenty-one states had become members, and the concept of a national model began to gain favor; thus, the organization was reborn again in 1932 as the National Dental Association; and

WHEREAS, today the NDA is comprised of forty-eight state and local chapters throughout the U.S. and Caribbean; representing over 6,000 black dentists and 30 million black Americans, NDA is currently expanding its membership to include oral health care professionals in Africa, Canada, Saudi Arabia, South America, and Latin America; and

WHEREAS, NDA goals and commitments are shared by its auxiliary organizations, namely the Auxiliary to the NDA, the National Dental Assistants Association, the National Dental Hygienists Association, and the Student National Dental Organization; and

WHEREAS, for 100 years, the NDA has been a national forum for minority dentists and a leader in advancing their rights within the dental profession, the armed services, the government, and the private sector; through scholarships and support programs, the NDA promotes dentistry as a viable profession; and

WHEREAS, the NDA works with purpose and commitment to improve the delivery of oral health care in underserved communities and the educational opportunities of minorities underrepresented in the oral health field; and

WHEREAS, having established itself at the vanguard of oral health in communities of color, the NDA seeks to perpetuate the tradition and upgrade the stature of African-American dentists in service to the minority community; increase the number of minorities in dentistry; provide its members with opportunities for continued education, collaborative research, leadership training, and business networking; and inform health policy and influence legislation that affects minority consumers and providers; and

WHEREAS, the NDA plays an instrumental role in enhancing opportunities for African-Americans entering and practicing in the dental field and improving oral health care for minorities nationwide, and the group and its members should be appropriately honored on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this body hereby commemorates the centennial anniversary of the National Dental Association and joins with its members in celebrating this significant milestone. We thank the NDA and its members for their ongoing dedication to providing quality oral health care to minorities and underserved communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.